



**Everywhere and Nowhere:
Assessing Gender Mainstreaming in
European Community
Development Cooperation**

October 2002

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ACRONYMS

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific
ALA	Asia and Latin America
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG	Directorate General
DNE	Detached National Expert
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
GAD	Gender and Development
ISQG	Inter-service Quality Support Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAO	National Authorizing Officer
NIP	National Indicative Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RELEX DGs	Directorate General for External Relations, Directorate General for Development, Directorate General for Trade, EuropeAid, and ECHO
SIA	Sustainability Impact Assessment
WID	Women in Development

PREFACE

This briefing analyses the efforts of the European Union to mainstream gender in its development cooperation activities. It focuses on the European Commission, including its interactions with the European Parliament and Council of Ministers, but does not analyse the policy and practice of EU Member States. This briefing documents the experiences of civil society advocates in pushing for effective gender mainstreaming in the European development activities. It is based on discussions with Commission staff, Members of the European Parliament, policy-makers in Member States, and civil society organisations in Europe and Southern countries. This briefing calls attention to areas where policy and practice must be strengthened to meet the goals of gender equality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In every society, the roles, responsibilities and influence of women and men are unequal. Gender inequality prevents women and men, boys and girls from fully exercising their human rights. Gender equality and equity advance human rights and are essential to effective and efficient work against poverty.

The Beijing Platform for Action established gender mainstreaming as a strategy to promote gender equality. Gender mainstreaming means that policies and programmes should be designed in ways that meet the different needs and interests of women and men.

Like many other donors and civil society organisations, the European Commission, in its cooperation programmes with developing countries, has struggled to mainstream gender. Drawing on research by One World Action, APRODEV and other civil society advocates, the following presents an agenda for reform to put the European Union's gender policies into practice.

European Union's Policy Commitments to Gender

The 1997 Amsterdam Treaty identified gender mainstreaming as a general competence of the European Union (EU). But this commitment has gone further on paper than in practice.

In the Cotonou Agreement governing relations between EU and ACP countries, there is a commitment to gender equality, but the hard areas of cooperation, such as economic and trade cooperation, structural adjustment, and tourism fail to refer to gender aspects at all. Gender is not mainstreamed in the 2002 Regulation governing relations with Asia and Latin America, or in the regional strategies. Trade policy does not adequately mainstream gender. Sustainability Impact Assessments are unlikely to produce a clear understanding of the gender impacts of policy because they do not look at both macro and micro level.

Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) are essential building blocks of effective gender mainstreaming. Yet a recent Commission review of 40 CSPs found that "the concept of gender mainstreaming is hardly found in the CSPs at all." A review by APRODEV of 40 CSPs found that country priorities were transport and macro-economic support, areas in which gender mainstreaming has not historically been well applied. In 16 out of 40 CSPs, these sectors account for between half to two-thirds of the European Community's aid allocation. Only 5 CSPs mention gender explicitly under the transport sector, mainly under employment opportunities or in relation to HIV/AIDS. In macro-economic or budgetary support, 13 CSPs mention gender issues in social services, or more generally regarding poverty and women.

Gender in Programme Implementation

The greatest challenge in mainstreaming lies in programme implementation at the country-level. The EU has long recognised the need for effective gender mainstreaming in implementation, but progress is slow: policy commitments evaporate at programme level and guidelines and manuals remain largely unused. Gender should

be an issue that brings together donors, the national government, and civil society. The reality is that donor co-ordination in partner countries is weak, overall, and even weaker regarding gender. Given the consistent refrain about inadequate data and tools, this lack of pooling of resources on gender is difficult to justify.

The EU has made some effort to promote discussion of gender equality with partner governments, for example in commitments under the Cotonou Agreement. But the truth is that gender is rarely on the agenda in political dialogue, and EU delegation staff in ACP countries rarely press the issue.

Dialogue with civil society could be an opportunity to promote gender equality goals, but this is not materialising. In a survey on civil society participation under the Cotonou Agreement in five ACP countries, it was found that even when concrete mechanisms for consultation on CSPs were put in place, civil society participation was lacking. In the context of weak civil society participation overall, women's organisations face particular barriers, due to lack of resources, capacity, and experience.

Mechanisms to put Gender Policies into Practice

The European Commission's restructuring of development and external relations created opportunities for effective gender mainstreaming. But structures which were meant to ensure that gender is both mainstreamed and given specific attention have resulted in gender being everyone's responsibility and no one's priority.

The Commission is facing enormous under-staffing to deliver on its gender policy commitments. DG Development, EuropeAid, DG External Relations, and DG Trade lack sufficient staff with gender expertise. Delegations, some with expanded responsibilities, do not have enough staff with gender expertise and responsibility. Gender expertise is still covered primarily through external consultants or detached national experts. The Inter-service Quality Support Group (IQSG) of the European Commission should assess and promote coherence between gender policies and development policy, but it lacks staff capacity to do this. Commission services are not required to integrate the recommendations of the IQSG. The weakness of the IQSG is evident in recent CSPs. There is little evidence that the newly expanded delegations in Southern countries are taking forward gender policy commitments. Rather, staff report being overwhelmed by new responsibilities, with insufficient training and resources.

The 1998 Council Regulation on "Integration of gender issues in development cooperation" allocated approximately two to three million euro per year for this work. Given the challenges in mainstreaming gender in all policy and programming with partner countries, this budget can only serve a catalytic function.

As long as the integration of cross-cutting themes in European Community aid is not clearly demonstrated, horizontal budget lines must be maintained as they have proven their innovative, catalytic and complementary function. In current discussions on more performance-based budget reporting systems, the Commission argues that it is nearly impossible to demonstrate the impact of European Community aid on separate sectoral issues (i.e. education, gender equality) when using budgetary support. This makes it essential to have gender sensitive indicators and specific targeted approaches (for example, a commitment to allocate 35% of aid to health and education). In the current policy and institutional environment, an end to earmarked funds might result in the total evaporation of gender policies in implementation.

Interviews with Commission staff reveal a huge range in competence regarding gender. Some staff feel confident, but most feel that gender is not an area they understand. At both headquarters and in delegations, there is not enough gender training, and what training exists is inadequate. In recent research, one official said there had not been gender training in her office since 1996, another said he had not received any gender training at all in his three years with the Commission, another said training did not take place in the delegation at all.

Existing opportunities to promote learning on gender mainstreaming are not being used. The first annual report on development cooperation did not mainstream a gender analysis at all. Meetings between staff from Member States, the Commission and Members of the European Parliament are opportunities for rhetoric, rather than finding ways forward.

Across the EU, policy statements, leadership, political will, and accountability for gender mainstreaming are issues which do not receive sufficient attention. This helps to explain the disappointing progress in putting gender policies into practice.

Conclusion

The European Commission's gender mainstreaming strategy is more of an idea than a reality. Mainstream policy instruments, such as regional cooperation agreements, CSPs, and SIAs, fail to integrate gender. A high proportion of European Community aid is going to sectors like transport and budgetary support where effective gender mainstreaming has made little progress and there is little commitment to reform. At a country-level, there is little donor co-ordination on gender, and gender is rarely an issue in dialogue with the government or work with civil society organisations.

Lack of progress in putting gender policies into practice is in large part due to institutional weakness. Organisational structures have mainstreamed gender in a way that means gender is everywhere and nowhere. There is insufficient staff, both at headquarters and delegations, and the staff that are in post are working in an institution that has not really taken gender on board. Commission staff lack understanding of gender policies, and there is little quality training available to raise their capacity. Regular learning mechanisms have become exercises in rhetoric and glossing over lack of action. Lack of political will is by far the largest stumbling block in implementing the EU's gender policies.

Given the importance of gender equality and equity in the fight against poverty and the achievement of full human rights for all, the slow progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and the reality that so many women and men, girls and boys are denied their human rights, the EU cannot afford to wait any longer in closing the gap between its gender policies and its practice.

Recommendations

Section 6 of this briefing sets out recommendations on EU's Policy Commitments to Gender, Gender in Programme Implementation, Mechanisms (Organisational Structure, Human Resources, Financial Resources, Training and Capacity, Learning), and Political Will and Accountability.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why Gender Equality?

In every society, the roles, responsibilities and influence of women and men are unequal, although the nature and extent of inequality varies from society to society. Although there are exceptions, in most cases women are disadvantaged and men are privileged by the organisation of gender roles in societies. Women are the majority of the world's poor. Globally, one in every three women has experienced violence in an intimate relationship. Worldwide, 24% of girls of primary school age are still not attending school, compared with 16% of boys. In 1999, women held only 12.7% of the world's seats in parliament.¹ Gender inequality also has costs for men. In many societies, violence has become accepted as a form of solving problems among men and between women and men.² In addition to the high risks faced by young women, young boys expose themselves to HIV/AIDS because they lack access to reproductive health education due to stereotypes about male sexuality.³ Gender inequality prevents women and men, girls and boys from fully enjoying and exercising their human rights and represents a huge loss in human potential.

Gender equality must thus be at the centre of work to eliminate poverty and promote human rights. A growing body of evidence shows that women's empowerment is necessary for poverty elimination. Above and beyond this, gender equality and equity are conditions for the full and free enjoyment and realisation of human rights.

Gender equality is now recognised as an overall strategic objective to achieve sustainable, people-centred development. The international community's commitment to the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality has most recently been stated as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. These Goals build on commitments made in UN agreements, the most comprehensive being the Beijing Platform for Action, which states that:

"The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and gender equality are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security for all peoples."⁴

¹ "Despite the gains women have made in many fields, they are still poorly represented in decision-making bodies. Women comprise only 13% of those in national legislatures. Among government ministers worldwide, women fare only slightly better at 14%, and are largely concentrated in sectors typically seen as the least powerful, such as social affairs and sports. The number of women heading those government departments with the most clout in the power structure is particularly low, with only 9.4% in the legal area and less than 5% in economic, political and executive positions. In the IMF women are 2.2% of governors and there are no women among the 24 directors. At the World Bank it is not much better: 5.5% of governors and 2 out of 24 directors" (see Social Watch Report No. 6/2002, p.75).

² Moser, C. and Clark, F., eds. (2001) "Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence." London: Zed Books.

³ Rivers, K. and Aggleton, P. (1999) "Adolescent Sexuality, Gender and the HIV Epidemic." New York: UNDP.

⁴ United Nations (1995) "Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women." Beijing, China.

The Beijing Platform for Action was a landmark in work for gender equality in development cooperation because it reiterated the strategy of gender mainstreaming as a means to promote gender equality. By signing up to the Platform for Action, national governments agreed that “Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.”⁵

1.2 Gender Mainstreaming – Why and What for?

The concept of gender provides an analytical framework that does not focus on women but on the processes that recreate and reinforce inequalities between women and men. Inequalities between women and men are not only a cost to women but to society as a whole and must be regarded as societal issues rather than as ‘women’s concerns’. It is widely recognised that gender inequality is not about women’s lack of integration in society or lack of skills, credit and resources, but the social processes and institutions that produce inequalities. It is not a matter of ‘adding women’ into existing processes and programmes, but of reshaping them to reflect the vision, interests and needs of women to produce gender-equitable outcomes.

Gender mainstreaming is a process and strategy to work towards the goal of gender equality and equity. Gender mainstreaming is a means to an end, not an end in itself. To be effective, it must be integral to all development decisions and interventions. It concerns the staffing, procedures and cultures of organisations as well as their policies and programmes.

According to the UNDP, “while a mainstreaming strategy is initially concerned with changing internal processes, this is in order to achieve changes in organisation outputs (the programme planned jointly with partner countries) with the objective of advancing the position of women and gender equality.”⁶ A mainstreaming strategy starts from the policy making end of development, by looking at the policies and practices of the donor government, the partner country, and civil society. The emphasis is placed on processes and policies as a way to achieve sustainable change in the situation of women and men.

It is necessary to distinguish between two types of mainstreaming strategies: the integrationist approach whereby the overall development agenda is not transformed, but each issue is adapted to take into account women-and-gender concerns; and the agenda-setting approach as a key strategy whereby women participate in decision-making and determine development priorities.⁷ In the agenda-setting model, the emphasis is on reshaping the mainstream rather than adding activities at the margin, focusing on equality as an objective rather than on women as a target group, and focusing on the broader policy and institutional context as well as project initiatives.

⁵ United Nations (1995) “Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women.” Beijing, China. para. 202

⁶ UNDP (2000) “Learning and Information Pack - Gender Mainstreaming.” New York: UNDP, Gender in Development Programme, September 2000.

⁷ OECD-Development Assistance Committee (1998) “DAC Sourcebook on Concepts and approaches linked to gender equality.” Paris: OECD.

Gender mainstreaming involves getting the right information about gender equality, using that information as the basis of decision-making, and having the skills and commitment to do it. Gender analysis – data that reveal the differences between women’s and men’s needs, roles, priorities, and access to and control of resources – is the bedrock of any gender mainstreamed intervention. Policies and programmes should be designed in ways which meet the different needs of women and men and ensure that women and men are equally involved in decision-making at all levels. To achieve gender mainstreaming, an organisation must have the skills, knowledge and commitment of staff.

Although the importance of good data, sound guidelines and procedures, and trained staff cannot be overstated, gender mainstreaming is much more than a technical issue. Because achieving gender equality means that some groups in society must cede power and others will gain it, the process requires a political commitment to transforming society.

2 European Union Policy Commitments to Gender

A commitment to gender equality is one of the key principles of the European Union. The EU and its Member States participated actively in drafting the Beijing Platform for Action and supported the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The 1997 Amsterdam Treaty identified gender mainstreaming in all its activities as a general competence of the European Union.⁸ The 2000 Communication, "Towards a Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality" specified that gender must be mainstreamed across the Commission's activities, both within and outside the European Union.

This overarching commitment to gender equality has been interpreted in policy statements produced by the RELEX family (Development, External Relations, Trade, EuropeAid, ECHO). Although all Commission services share a common commitment to gender equality and the services responsible for external relations should work under shared policy guidelines, these institutions have pursued work on gender mainstreaming at different paces and in different ways.⁹

2.1 Approach to Gender and Gender Mainstreaming

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Commission's understanding of gender moved from a Women in Development approach to a more gender-based analysis. The current Community approach to gender mainstreaming has two components: one, integrating gender throughout its relations and activities with partner countries, and two, supporting interventions that enhance the situation of women directly. Although the approach to gender mainstreaming has been developed, there are large areas of inconsistency and slippage in the understanding, with approaches ranging from rights-based to efficiency.

Efficiency Approach

In the 2001 Programme of Action for Gender Mainstreaming, it is argued that gender is important because of the correlation between gender inequality and high levels of human poverty, as shown by indicators on health, literacy, and economic production.¹⁰ This analysis leads to an efficiency-based approach, as mainstreaming gender "makes for more effective, long-lasting, equitable and sustainable development cooperation with a positive impact in terms of meeting poverty reduction goals." The implication is that promoting gender equality is an efficient means to a social end, rather than an end

⁸ European Union, Treaty of Amsterdam (1998) Art.3 Paragraph 2.

⁹ Recent EC Communications related to gender and external relations have been reviewed in a report entitled, "The Integration of Gender Issues into EC Communications on Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Co-operation, on the European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratisation in Third Countries, and on Conflict Prevention; and the implementation of these commitments made to mainstreaming gender in the External Relations Field." (June 2002)

¹⁰ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (2001) "Programme of Action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in Community Development Co-operation."

in itself, making women an instrument in this process.¹¹

Rights-Based Approaches

Alongside this efficiency rationale, other policies place more emphasis on rights-based language. In the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and ACP countries, the strongest argument for mainstreaming gender is made as part of the clause on respect for human rights and democracy. The Communication “The EU’s Role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries” states that: “The EU upholds the principle that the human rights of women and the girl-child are an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of human rights.”¹² This rights-based commitment is re-affirmed in the guidelines for spending under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. Although the rights-based language is clear, the commitment is weakened because a rights-based gender perspective is not carried throughout the Communication on Human Rights, nor in the Commission’s practice. The gender equality commitment comes more at a rhetorical level than an applied level.

The rationale for gender mainstreaming in the areas of trade policy is much less well-defined, in part because DG Trade has not formulated its own policy statements and refers to policy developed by DGs Development, External Relations and Employment and Social Affairs. From the statements that have been made, it is apparent that DG Trade’s approach to gender mainstreaming is based on the idea that trade policies impact men and women differently, but there is little clarity beyond this. The Sustainability Impact Assessments which will be conducted before any trade agreement is concluded contain gender equality as one possible social indicator.¹³ This initiative does not go far enough as gender is not a compulsory criterion of analysis. The use of SIAs reveals DG Trade’s view of gender as part of the external environment in which trade negotiations occur. In DG Trade’s interpretation of gender mainstreaming, trade policies may have gender impacts, but someone else is responsible for dealing with these impacts. Thus, DG Trade’s approach is neither rights-based nor efficiency, but based on the notion that flanking measures can compensate for the negative impacts of trade policy. This approach overlooks the structural inequalities in societies that prevent women from benefiting equally from economic and trade opportunities, and the reality that trade policies and actions have direct consequences on gender relations.

This lack of clarity in policy statements is the foundation of confusion among officials and practitioners about putting gender policies into practice. A report prepared in 1994 assessing gender policies in the European Community found that some officials thought that Community policy on gender applied to women-specific projects, rather

11 The efficiency approach was a most popular approach during the 1980s with governments and multilateral agencies, esp. the World Bank, when it was anticipated that policies of economic stabilization and adjustment rely on women’s economic contribution to development. According to Moser (1989) it assumes that women are an under-used labour force which can be exploited at low cost and that their time is elastic and can be stretched to include tasks that fall upon them as a result of declining social services.

¹² Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. (8 May 2001) “The European Union’s role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries.”

¹³ Maltais, A., Nilsson, M., Persson, A. (April 2002) “Final Report – Sustainability Impact Assessment of WTO negotiations on the major food crops sector, Executive Summary” Report prepared for the European Commission. p. 24

than all projects.¹⁴ In recent research by One World Action, most officials interviewed stated they did not think the EC had a common understanding of gender mainstreaming.¹⁵ Some officials described their approach as 'gender mainstreaming', but further discussion revealed that they understood gender to mean 'women' and gender mainstreaming to mean increasing the numbers of women and "getting women to do things." Other officials had a solid grasp of gender mainstreaming, but did not believe that their understanding was reflected in Commission policy.

Thus, policy statements do not contain a shared understanding of the overarching justification for mainstreaming gender. The result is policy and practice that at best do not maximise on areas of shared concern, and at worst serve to contradict each other. This lack of clarity in policy statements is reflected in officials' confusion and lack of understanding of gender mainstreaming.

2.2 Gender Mainstreaming in Policy Formulation

2.2.1. Mainstreaming in Policy Instruments

The policies governing relations between the European Community and partner countries are the first entry point for attention to gender mainstreaming. These policies mention gender, but not in a way which makes clear that meeting gender equality objectives must be at the centre of cooperation agreements.

The Cotonou Agreement

The Cotonou Agreement covering relationships between the EU and ACP countries incorporates a strong commitment to gender equality.¹⁶ It includes gender relevant provisions in its Preamble, in nine different Articles, and in a Joint Declaration on the actors of the partnership. Among the objectives of the partnership it is stated that "Systematic account shall be taken of the situation of women and gender issues in all areas – political, economic and social." In Article 31 on "Gender issues", appearing within the heading "thematic and cross-cutting issues" on cooperation strategies, a gender sensitive approach is advocated for every level of development cooperation, including macro-economic policies: "Cooperation shall help strengthen policies and programmes that improve, ensure and broaden the equal participation of men and women in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life." Yet, however prominently gender is presented as a cross-cutting area that should be considered in all aspects of ACP-EU cooperation, too little guidance is provided on how to translate this paper commitment into practical action. The most important gender relevant provisions are grouped together in isolated sections. The 'hard' areas of cooperation, such as economic and trade cooperation, structural adjustment and debt, tourism, and management of ACP-EU cooperation, fail to refer to gender aspects at all.¹⁷

¹⁴ Colombo, Daniela (1994) "Assessment of WID/Gender policies of the European Community and the Member States and of their implementation by the various administrations" Report prepared for European Commission. p.37.

¹⁵ One World Action (forthcoming) "Closing the Gap: putting gender policies into practice." London: One World Action.

¹⁶ European Commission Directorate General for Development "ACP-EU Partnership Agreement", signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000

¹⁷ Arts, K. (2000) "WIDE Position Paper on Gender Aspects of the Cotonou Agreement" Brussels: WIDE.

Similarly, the cooperation agreements governing the Community's relations with non-ACP countries make some policy commitment to gender equality, but there are major gaps. Since 1992, all agreements concluded between the EU and third countries must incorporate a clause defining human rights as a basic element. But despite international treaties establishing linkages between human rights and gender equality, the Commission's Communication "On the inclusion of respect for democratic principles and human rights in agreements between the Community and third countries" contains no requirement that gender equality be part of human rights clauses.¹⁸ The Communication recognises race, nationality, and ethnicity as sources of discrimination, but does not include gender or intersections between this and other forms of discrimination. The resulting policy fails to address gender inequality - one of the root causes of denial of human rights.

Cooperation Agreements with Asia and Latin America

The fact that gender equality slips through the cracks in policy formulation is evident in the 1992 Regulation covering cooperation with Asia and Latin America (ALA) and in the regional strategies for Latin America and Asia. The ALA Regulation, which provides the legal framework for cooperation with the two regions, states that Community cooperation policies should include measures to promote gender equality.¹⁹ But this commitment to gender equality has evaporated in more recent Commission policies, including the new draft ALA regulation (2002) and regional strategy documents. The regional strategies include situational analyses of the regions, an indication of the Community's priority areas (in both economic, development, and regional cooperation), and an outline implementation strategy, but there is little reference to gender. In the Latin American Regional Strategy, the focus is on inequality based on race and ethnicity, with some mentions of women as a disadvantaged group.²⁰ However, this analysis does not carry through to priority areas for intervention and implementation. The Asia Regional Strategy makes no reference to gender equality.²¹

Trade Policies

Similarly, the policy agenda to mainstream gender through trade negotiations has made significant progress, but much more must be done. As discussed, Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) could include gender equality as an assessment criterion, but major concerns remain regarding the methodology and implementation. Furthermore, despite the Commission's heavy financial investment in the process (currently amounting to 10% of DG Trade's total budget), there is little evidence that SIAs are leading to the formulation of trade-related policies and measures that could help to spread the potentially positive effects of liberalisation in more equitable and sustainable ways.²² The Commission's analysis of trade impacts is unlikely to produce a clear understanding of how trade affects gender relations. This is because trade studies carried out to date focus solely on macro-economic issues. The APRODEV study on "EPAs- What's in it for Women?", with a focus on women in Zimbabwe, calls for an

¹⁸ Commission Communication (23 May 1995) "On the inclusion of respect for democratic principles and human rights in agreements between the Community and Third Countries." COM (95) 216.

¹⁹ Council Regulation (25 February 1992) "Financial and technical assistance to, and economic co-operation with, the developing countries in Latin America and Asia." No 443/92.

²⁰ European Commission (April 2002) "Latin American Regional Strategy Document 2002-2006"

²¹ European Commission (September 2001) "Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnership." COM (2001) 469 final.

²² Joint NGO statement on Sustainability Impact Assessments of EU Trade Policy, July 2002.

analysis of the effects of future trade arrangements on different groups in society, with specific attention on the benefits for poor women and men.²³ Without assessing the impact of trade liberalisation on people's livelihoods at macro and micro level, impacts on gender equality can not be assessed. Yet, linkages between macro and micro level are not included in EC impact assessments or policies.

DG Trade also cites its work on core labour standards and corporate social responsibility as areas in which they aim to promote gender equality objectives. Yet the Communication, "Promoting core labour standards and improving social governance in the context of globalisation", barely mentions gender in its analysis of the interface between trade, economic growth and equitable sustainable development.²⁴ In social dialogue meetings with CSOs, DG Trade officials have argued that they are working to mainstream gender, but when pressed to explain how this fits into their policies and practice, it is clear that measures to promote gender equality are seen as outside DG Trade's remit. There is little recognition of the contradictions between promoting gender-equitable cooperation policies and trade policies which maintain or deepen gender inequalities.

Policy on Conflict Prevention

The EC Policy on Conflict prevention does not include a systematic integration of gender issues, but offers several entry points and refers to support to initiatives by and/or for women.²⁵ The need for equal participation of men and women in social, economic and political life is mentioned under support for democracy, the rule of law and civil society. Root causes of conflict (social injustice, poverty, HIV/AIDS, trafficking of women) are recognised and presented not just as threats to prosperity but as the root of much of violent conflict. The development of a model for indicators for the assessment of potential conflict situations in the CSPs is underway and will include women's representation in decision-making bodies. The Communication calls for gender sensitive training for staff participating in international peace missions, and training modules have been prepared which include a section on gender and crisis management. Missions to Afghanistan and Indonesia have included gender experts and have had a specific gender focus. Commission officials stress the principles of the human rights policies of the EU in their conflict prevention policies.²⁶ The important role of local experts and in-country knowledge is emphasised. There is stated readiness to further develop effective communication for sharing best practice and for improvement of practice.

However, these policies do not take into account existing recommendations on integrating gender concerns (for example, UNSC Resolution 1325²⁷), and there is more work to be done on monitoring mechanisms for implementation. Key issues are the

²³ APRODEV (November 2002) "EPAs –What's in it for Women? A gender based impact assessment study on Women in Zimbabwe: Issues in future trade negotiations with the EU."

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (18 July 2001) "Promoting core labour standards and improving social governance in the context of globalisation."

²⁵ Commission Communication (11 April 2001) on Conflict Prevention.

²⁶ European Centre for Common Ground, International Alert and APRODEV (22 May 2002) "InterAgency Forum on Conflict Prevention: Women, Conflict Prevention and Resolution: The role of the EU."

²⁷ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000); or European Parliament (2000/2035 (INI), "Report on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolutions." Rapporteur Maj Britt Theorin.

potential for NGOs in the field to feed into EC monitoring, gender training, gender sensitive indicators (early warning) and the importance of translating progressive policies into increased human and financial resources through changes in budget allocation.

Humanitarian Aid Policies

The importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in emergency and humanitarian aid work has gained more attention within the Commission. A report commissioned by the Commission from 1995 on “Gender, emergencies and humanitarian aid” outlines a gender perspective on emergencies, relief and development as well as some of the constraints on integrating gender into relief operations.²⁸ An ECHO-APRODEV seminar on gender and emergencies concluded that ECHO needs to introduce a gender focus at the earliest stage of project and programme formulation, develop strategic approaches and clear policy formulation, and implement a monitoring system with gender sensitive performance indicators.²⁹ The key problem identified was not the lack of guidelines but their implementation and lack of accountability. Yet, the 1999 assessment of humanitarian activities found that “The gender dimension of operations was rarely effectively integrated.”³⁰ The Programme of Action 2001 states that ECHO will continue to focus on advocacy and awareness-raising in relation to gender related violations of human rights in armed conflict situations, and support targeted humanitarian assistance addressing the special needs of women. The ECHO Aid Strategy 2002 states that more attention will be paid to mainstreaming rights related issues, including gender. Proposed actions are to integrate a component on gender issues in the new Framework Partnership Agreement and to include gender in training for desk officers. These initiatives are a good step, but they have yet to materialise, and are only a slight move forward from the 1995 recommendations.

Thus, mainstream policies governing relations with third countries demonstrate little consistent commitment to gender equality. Gender is mentioned in most policies, but largely as a rhetorical commitment that evaporates as the policy moves from analysis to implementation.

2.2.2. Country Strategy Papers

Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) are identified by the EU as essential building blocks of effective gender mainstreaming. In the Commission’s guidelines for CSPs, the promotion of cross-cutting concerns, including gender equality, is listed as one of the principles that should motivate and inform all areas of programming.³¹ But beyond this broad goal, the guidelines for CSPs make no further mention about how to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in the CSP preparation process. Existing commitments to mainstreaming gender in policy and programming are not referenced

²⁸ Byrne, B. and Baden, S. (November 1995) “Gender, emergencies and humanitarian assistance”, Report commissioned by the WID desk, European Commission, DG Development.

²⁹ Report on ECHO-APRODEV seminar on Gender and Emergencies (ECHO/QCE/B7-210/96/105E). 4-5 November 1996.

³⁰ European Commission (26 October 1999) Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the “Assessment and future of Community humanitarian activities.” COM (1999) 468 final.

³¹ European Commission, Secretariat of the IGSG (4 May 2001) “Guidelines for implementation of the Common Framework for Country Strategy Papers.”

and, importantly, there is no discussion of gender as a criterion for assessment during the quality assurance phase of CSP preparation.

In light of the importance of CSPs, the quality of gender mainstreaming in the CSPs that have been produced to date is very troubling. A recent review of 40 CSPs conducted by DG Development found that:

“the concept of gender mainstreaming is hardly found in the CSPs at all. It is notable that in most CSPs, the focus is on women and women's situation, whereas analyses on men and boys are missing. When gender is mentioned it is almost always under the social sector and sometimes in the context of human rights and/or governance. The major sectors of concern are thus transport, macro-economic support, and trade where linkages between gender and the area are unclear.”³²

This study of CSPs sheds light on how practitioners are interpreting gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is being interpreted to mean targeting women, who are seen as vulnerable rather than as agents of their own empowerment. There is a focus on women as users of services, such as health and education, at a micro-level, rather than on men, the power imbalances in the relationship between women and men, and the need for meeting women's strategic interests, such as access to decision-making power. There is little understanding of the structural causes of gender inequality and the need for transformation of the gender relations.

Given the importance of CSPs in shaping the policy and programming relationship with Southern countries, they are the critical first building block in ensuring that European Community cooperation mainstreams gender and promotes gender equality objectives. This is particularly important in the context of the relationship between CSPs and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). According to the EU, CSPs should be drafted within the framework of the analysis, priorities, and strategies of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy. Yet PRSPs too have some considerable way to go with respect to fully incorporating gender. Thus, the current policy agenda presents some real challenges to government's implementation of gender policy commitments and to policy and practice which advances gender equality and human rights.

2.2.3. Gender in Priority Areas

The EU Development Policy (2000) proposes six priority areas: trade and development, regional integration and cooperation, macro economic policies and promotion of equitable access to social services, transport, food security and sustainable development, and institutional capacity building. Gender equality is mentioned as an objective in itself and as a vital factor in strengthening the impact and sustainability of cooperation.³³ In the 2001 Programme of Action for gender mainstreaming, the Commission presents a brief gender analysis of the six priority areas and the necessary steps for improving mainstreaming in each area. The Commission states that it needs to review and analyse policy guidelines according to the situation of women and men, strengthen the use of gender sensitive output indicators, reinforce capacity for policy dialogue on gender, and strengthen methodologies for quality assurance on gender sensitive sectoral policies. Although these are welcome steps, there is little evidence of follow-up action, as policies and

³² European Commission (February 2002) “Assessment of Country Strategy Papers with Reference to Gender.”

³³ Declaration by the Council and the Commission (10 November 2001) “The European Community's development policy.”

guidelines that address the gender equality issues in the six priority areas have not been produced or, if so, have not been made public. This seriously weakens the Commission's ability to deliver on its gender policy commitments.

The strategy on sectoral policy guidelines in the 2001 Programme of Action is problematic. Sectors are ranked to reflect priorities in gender mainstreaming. But rather than prioritize trade and transport, where much needs to be done to mainstream gender, the priority sectors for gender mainstreaming (health, education, and food security) are those where the case for a gender perspective is already more widely understood.

This is particularly problematic considering the priorities emerging from the most recent round of CSPs. A review of 40 CSPs (25 of which are African) conducted by APRODEV looked at the priorities in the European Community response strategy, the financial allocation under the National Indicative Programme (NIP) (i.e. the programmable envelope allocated to each country), and the integration of gender issues.³⁴ Overall, the top priority areas were transport and macro-economic support, areas in which gender mainstreaming has not historically been well applied. In 16 out of 40 CSPs, these sectors account for between half to two-thirds of European Community aid allocation, through the National Indicative Programme. Given the proportion of the Community's aid portfolio allocated to these sectors, there is a high likelihood that aid spending will not be used on activities which promote gender equality and equity. This must be seen in light of the broader issue of lack of civil society participation in the formulation of policy in the CSP and programming of aid under the NIPs.

Transport has been chosen as a main priority by 22 out of 40 countries, mainly road building and maintenance. Among the 22 countries (19 of which are African), 10 countries have more than 50% of envelope A³⁵ allocated to transport, and 8 countries more than 30% of envelope A, which amounts to an average of half of the NIP. But only 5 CSPs mention gender explicitly under the transport and rural development sector, mainly under employment opportunities or in relation to HIV/AIDS. Yet no further reference is made to different gender needs and priorities. Women's roles and responsibilities – such as fetching fuel or water, or doing fieldwork or community work - means that their transport needs are usually based in their local area. While men may appreciate speed for long-distance travelling, women emphasise safety and freedom from sexual harassment. Lack of access to safe, effective and appropriate transport services prevents women from taking full advantage of opportunities. For example, in Nigeria, although the majority of farm products sold in urban markets are produced by rural women farmers, and in rural markets, the majority (about 90%) of traders are women, only a minority (about 10%) of traders in urban markets are women. Lack of access to transport services is one factor that explains women's reduced participation in urban markets, thus limiting their full integration in the economy.³⁶

³⁴ APRODEV (August 2002) "Table summarising some aspects of the ACP Country Support Strategies."

³⁵ The NIP is based on envelope A as the programmable envelope allocated to each country. Envelope B can be used to cover unforeseen needs and is not programmable (i.e. emergency situations, debt initiatives, instability in export revenues). Both, envelope A and B are allocations under the European Development Fund (EDF).

³⁶ Samuel I. Oni (July 2002) "Gender, Transport and Food Distribution in Metropolitan Lagos, Nigeria." Presentation at the Women's Worlds 02. Kampala, Uganda, 21-26 July 2002.

Macro-economic or budgetary support is another main feature in 16 other countries with an average allocation of one-third of the NIP. Macro economic support generally means improving access to basic services (such as education and health) and supporting the reform programme of the state. Education and human capital development are mentioned as main priority by 10 countries with an average of 62% of NIP, and health is mentioned as a main priority by 3 countries with average of 41% of NIP. 13 CSPs mention gender issues in social services, referring to education and health, others refer to HIV/AIDS, violence, female headed households, or more generally to poverty and women, a few indicate the need for gender disaggregated data. Gender sensitive budgeting as a means for accountability of government spending is not mentioned in any of the CSPs³⁷. Without clear indicators and specific budget lines, it is difficult to assess how the objective of poverty reduction strategies will be met through macro-economic and budget support, how the poorest women and men will be reached, and how activities are promoting gender equality.

Regarding **education**, the recent European Commission evaluation of its education work lends weight to concerns about the impact of budget support on promoting gender equality.³⁸ Support for universal primary education through an increase of funds for basic education or through budget support, produces only an indirect effect on poverty reduction and gender inequality. Girl's education and gender appear in almost all policy documents, but only a few countries to date have developed consistent implementation measures. Lessons highlighted by the report are that universal primary education *per se* is unable to reach the poor and poor girls, and that in the absence of specific targeted measures, it is difficult for them to benefit from potentially increased access. By far the most common reason among women and girls to discontinue their education or training programme is early pregnancy, but a gender-blind curriculum, discrimination, and institutionalised power structures that produce gender inequality are also important. The report concludes that the fight against poverty will reach its objectives and its beneficiaries only by specifically targeting the poor and girls at school. This casts a shadow on the strategy of implementing gender mainstreaming through government budgetary support, rather than targeted spending.

With budgetary support becoming an increasing feature of European Community assistance and constituting up to 50% of the total country programme, a strong case can be made to subject budgetary support programmes to an analysis of their gender-responsiveness. The impact of specific patterns of budgetary support on gender equality can thus be ascertained, and it can be seen whether specific areas targeted serve to reduce, increase or leave unchanged gender inequality. If the outputs from budgetary support do not contribute to reduce gender inequalities, then it needs to be reassessed and redesigned to ensure that government services funded by budgetary support are gender sensitive and accessible to the poorest women, men and children.³⁹

Little improvement can be seen with regard to **food security and rural development** since the 1994 assessment. None of the 40 CSPs analysed gender issues explicitly under this priority area. Key gender issues to be addressed in this section are production, access and control over resources (land, inheritance, credit, etc.),

³⁷ For further information on Gender Budgeting Initiatives, see the programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat, supported by UNIFEM and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC); or the work of Diana Elson (1999) "Gender Budgeting Initiatives", or of Debbie Budlender (forthcoming) "Review of Gender Budget Initiatives".

³⁸ Development Researcher's Network Sri (May 2002) "The evaluation of EC Support to the education sector in ACP countries - Final Report."

³⁹ APRODEV (2002) Concept Notes on Gender Budget Initiative and EU Budgetary Support.

subsistence and commercial food production, and nutritional quality. The 2000 evaluation report of EC Food security policy and programme management concluded that the question of changes in gender relations and the balance of responsibilities and labour between women and men were not adequately addressed.⁴⁰ The report states that most project designs make no specific reference to gender. If projects aim specifically at women, an analysis of changes in gender relations is not included. The evaluation report concludes that changes in gender relations are not a project aim, and therefore unexpected or unintended. In view of further modernisation of agriculture and the liberalisation of agricultural trade, which often excludes and ignores women's farmers, this weakness in EC policy on food security is a major omission.

Institutional capacity building, good governance and the rule of law are mentioned as main priorities in two countries with an average of 29% financial allocation. Women's poverty should be seen in the context of good governance and legal/political framework. This is recognised in so far as about six CSPs mention legal frameworks and discriminatory laws as one of the reasons for women's subordinate position and their poverty. Yet, despite the numerous conflict situations in many of the ACP countries under study, not much attention is given to gender and conflict prevention or resolution. Only two Pacific countries make an explicit reference to women's contribution to conflict prevention and leading role in conflict resolution. It can be inferred that women are often still seen as a vulnerable group. Yet, there is ample evidence that women offer strategies and solutions at all levels of peace building processes, and that without women's participation in all conflict prevention initiatives, women and men will not benefit equally or equitably from reconciliation and reconstruction initiatives.⁴¹

Trade and development is not mentioned in any of the CSPs as a main priority, despite the current trade negotiations between the ACP and EU countries which started in late September 2002 and will run for the next six years. Yet, poor women experience poverty precisely because they lack access to and control over the economic resources which would enable them to produce and trade effectively. Women's participation in the formal and informal market differs greatly from that of men, with women more likely to depend on economic activities in the informal sector. But macro-economic support often ignores the informal sector. The issue of women's access to land and economic resources needs to be addressed domestically, if women shall be enabled to gain more decision-making power to meet the challenges of global free trade. These are major challenges, which require specifically designed programmes to overcome existing gender bias and progressively bring about social change. Without such change, women are likely to find themselves by-passed by the opportunities opened up under free trade arrangements.⁴² The EU, in its trade and development policy, must pay greater attention to this issue by analysing the impact of policy at a micro-level. A recent study on the impact of trade liberalisation on food security found that in most cases, trade liberalisation is impacting heavily on women

⁴⁰ NR International Ltd, NEI b.v. (December 2000) "Evaluation of EC Food Aid Security Policy, Food Aid Management and Programmes in support of Food Security, Regulation No 1292/96 of June 1996".

⁴¹ European Centre for Common Ground, International Alert and APRODEV (22 May 2002) "Report of Interagency Forum on Conflict Prevention: Women, Conflict Prevention and Resolution - The role for the EU."; and European Parliament (20 October 2000) "Report on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution." (2000/2025(INI)) Rapporteur Maj Britt Theorin.

⁴² APRODEV (November 2002) "EPAs - What's in it for Women? A gender based impact assessment study on Women in Zimbabwe: Issues in future trade negotiations with the EU."

and deepening gender inequality.⁴³ In only one case was it shown that liberalisation has enabled rural women to engage in micro-enterprises. Without attention to the impact of trade liberalisation on people's livelihoods at a micro-level, women are likely to bear the brunt of adjustment measures which accompany the move towards free trade.

Thus, there is a clear and pressing need for greater attention to gender disparities in the EU's priority areas. Areas that receive the lion's share of European Community aid spending, such as transport and macro-economic support, do not promote gender equality objectives. Policy and practice on food security, governance, conflict, and trade must also be strengthened to include a gender analysis. In the context of increased cooperation through budgetary support, more must be done to ensure that European Community aid funds are targeted to programmes which promote gender equality.

2.3 Policy Coherence

The EU has recognised policy coherence as an issue for the reform of the management of external assistance. To this end, programming must produce the right 'policy mix', incorporating both external assistance and other EU policies and priorities. CSPs are identified as a key instrument for ensuring policy coherence, and all CSPs must include a section analysing coherence.⁴⁴ According to the Commission's guidelines, policies on development, trade, agriculture, fishing, and foreign and security policy must be at the centre of the coherence analysis in CSPs. Policies on environment, migration, research, and drug trafficking should be considered, although they have a less obvious impact on third countries. The guidelines do not include the EU's policies on gender equality and equity as an area which must be considered in analysing policy coherence. This helps to explain the dismal performance to date in mainstreaming gender in CSPs. The fact that gender is not an issue for policy coherence also explains DG Trade's tendency to see gender equality as an issue outside their narrowly trade-focused remit. Despite the EU's focus on policy coherence, gender equality and human rights commitments are consistently overshadowed by competing EU priorities in trade, economic policy, and foreign and security policy which are regarded to be gender-neutral.

Having said this, it must be noted that the Commission has made progress on the need for coherence between EU policy and the external policy environment. In recently published CSPs, reference is made to Southern government's international commitments in existing or forthcoming national gender policy plans. More gender aspects are taken up in the country analysis. Yet not enough is done to carry this analysis into the European Community's response programme and corresponding financial support.⁴⁵

This review of gender mainstreaming in EU policies paints a troubling picture. Agreements governing relations between the EU and Southern countries do not

⁴³ APRODEV (2000) "Trade and the hungry."; and Globalier Studier (2000) "Trade and Hunger", Globalier Studier no4, October 2000. (The study provides an overview of case studies on the impact of trade liberalisation on food security.)

⁴⁴ European Commission (11 May 2001) "Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and Policy Mix: Guidelines for the examination of the issue of Policy Mix in CSPs."

⁴⁵ APRODEV (August 2002) "Table summarising some aspects of the ACP Country Support Strategies."

routinely include gender. CSPs do not mainstreaming gender. Policy on priority sectors is weak on gender policy implementation. Analysis of coherence among EU cooperation policy does not include gender policy commitments. These policies do not categorically ignore gender equality concerns – almost all policies make some reference to gender. But the attention to gender evaporates in the move from general introductory statements to the core of the policy. The overall picture is of gender as rhetoric, not practice.

3 Gender in Programme Implementation

The EU has long recognised the need for effective gender mainstreaming in policy implementation. In many Parliamentary reports and in the Council's Conclusions in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1995, and 2001, there are calls for the integration of gender at various points of programme implementation. The Commission itself repeats this theme throughout the 1995 and 2001 Communications on gender.

3.1 Project Management Tools

According to the 1994 assessment, the Commission requires a few, concise, precise obligatory measures and tools to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in programme implementation. This call for analytical and operational tools is repeated in the 1995 Communication. In 2001 the Commission called, yet again, for more gender sensitive guidelines, manuals, intranet sites, and methodologies. The Commission notes the problem of "gender policy evaporation" in its 2001 Communication, but given the slow progress on mainstreaming, it is unlikely that there has been much evaporation, but rather procrastination (see also Chapter 5 Political Will).

The 1994 assessment found that efforts by WID Desk officers to increase staff awareness on gender were hampered by the fact that many officials did not find the time to read or use country profiles or guidelines for project management.⁴⁶ In 1993, the Commission produced a detailed manual on gender in the project cycle, but the manual "was not used very much: some desk officers confess that they have given it away to a 'woman expert', others have it on their shelves but it is clear that they have never opened it."⁴⁷ The manuals were considered too abstract, complicated and extensive to be practically applicable. In 2002, the Commission completed a revision of the Project Cycle Manual which attempts to bring together guidelines for gender in project management with overall programming guidelines. The result is a much improved project management tool, but the real test will be whether staff put it to use in their work.

3.2 Donor Coordination

Because most donors share a commitment to gender mainstreaming, gender should be an issue that brings donors together. There are examples of interagency WID/GAD groups or donor co-ordination groups (such as in Guinea Conakry, Mali, Madagascar, Tanzania and Uganda) which bring together resource persons with gender competence at different levels (e.g. donors, National Authorizing Officer, EU Delegation, gender experts, civil society representatives, women's groups) to co-ordinate and promote gender mainstreaming efforts in policy and programming. Yet not much information is made available on such examples of good practice. Only three (Tanzania, Madagascar, Guinea Bissau) out of 40 CSPs mention an interagency group on WID/GAD, Uganda and Mali are not mentioned.

The reality is that donor co-ordination in partner countries is weak, overall, and even weaker regarding gender. Evidence from Nicaragua, South Africa and Bangladesh shows that gender is not a regular agenda item for donor co-ordination.⁴⁸ According to one official, gender is only addressed if the programme that is being prepared or

⁴⁶ Colombo, p. 26

⁴⁷ Colombo, p. 30

⁴⁸ One World Action (forthcoming)

discussed has a strong gender element. Another official said that donors go to each other's meetings, on gender or other shared priorities, but there is little evidence of real cooperation. Given the consistent refrain that donors lack data and tools to effectively mainstream gender, this lack of co-ordination and pooling of resources on gender is difficult to justify. There is a need for further institutionalisation and for a higher profile of existing gender mainstreaming and co-ordination efforts.

3.3 Political Dialogue

Political dialogue is a vital opportunity for promoting and implementing gender equality commitments, given that it forms the basis for cooperation agreements and programmes. In 1992, the European Parliament recommended that EU Delegations increase their contact and dialogue with civil society organisations working for gender equality. The 1995 Council Resolution state that gender "should be a constant feature in all policy dialogue and negotiation with partner countries" and that "gender issues should be systematically included in all co-ordination initiatives of the Community and the Member States."⁴⁹ The 2001 Communication states that "The Commission will strongly advocate on-the-ground collaboration and co-ordination for the achievement of gender equality goals among other donors," and that the Commission will "reinforce, at delegation level, capacity for sectoral policy dialogues with governments and civil society to bring gender issues and women increasingly to the forefront."

In the context of this policy mandate, the Community has made some effort to ensure that gender equality is on the agenda in discussions with partner governments. For example, under the Cotonou Agreement, the ACP-EU political dialogue shall explicitly "encompass cooperation strategies as well as global and sectoral policies, including gender". Yet agreements with other countries are not as clear. The result is that gender is rarely on the agenda, and if so, it is not discussed in-depth.

Policy evaporation often results from reluctance to pursue equality issues at the national level if these are not put on the agenda by the national government. For example, research in Nicaragua revealed that the national government's stance on gender equality was identified as an explanation for weak implementation of EU gender policies.⁵⁰ This undervalues government's existing policy commitments to gender, both domestically and internationally. Raising gender equality issues can give greater legitimacy and impetus to the momentum for change already existing in partner countries.

In recent research in Nicaragua and South Africa, One World Action found that delegation staff did not push gender as a topic of discussion in policy dialogue.⁵¹ One official was not aware of the partner government's commitments to gender equality, and could not comment on dialogue between governments about shared priorities regarding gender. According to another official, guidelines that gender should be part of dialogue would help to ensure it was raised regularly.

At a parliamentary level, the March 2002 ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Cape Town called attention to gender concerns, stating that: "any future ACP-EU development and economic cooperation and trade arrangements should be structured in such a way as to reduce gender gaps in access to economic resources,

⁴⁹ Development Council (20 December 1995) "Council Resolution: Integrating gender issues in development co-operation." Paragraphs 4 and 9.

⁵⁰ One World Action (forthcoming)

⁵¹ One World Action (forthcoming)

opportunities and outcomes.”⁵². Furthermore, it calls for “specific programmes designed to address supply side constraints which are gender sensitive and see to systematically improve access of women to economic resources”, as well of paying specific attention to “insulate areas of particular importance to poor and women in budget cuts and to support revenue incidence analysis to identify the impact of new revenue measures on the poor and on women.” None of these issues are yet spelled out in EC policy papers or have been raised in policy discussions. Yet successful implementation of such measures needs a concerted effort from different partners in policy dialogue.

Dialogue between the EU and other regions has not gone far enough to keep gender on the agenda. The Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework produced at the third Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM) included a statement to “promote the welfare of women and children.” This is a welcome step, but there is little indication of how this commitment will be carried out in practice. The Commission staff working paper in preparation for the Fourth ASEM meeting in September 2002 identified particular attention to vulnerable groups of women and children as a priority and states that gender issues should be included in dialogue on social matters.⁵³

EU-Latin America dialogue has also made an effort to include gender, but there are major gaps. At the Madrid Summit in 2002, EU and LA governments agreed to “promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as a general policy”.⁵⁴ This builds on commitments from the 1999 Rio Summit meeting, in which promoting the role of women appeared as the third priority of eleven. But the Commission did not make clear how this commitment to gender equality would be put into practice, as gender was not mentioned in the Communication on Follow-up to the 1999 Summit.⁵⁵ The Assessment Report on progress on the Rio Summit commitments states that none of the events or programmes contributed to promoting gender equality. In the 2002 Madrid Summit statement on common values and positions, there is yet another commitment at the outset to promoting gender equality, but no further mention of this commitment in the detail of the document.⁵⁶

Partnership and dialogue with civil society is an opportunity to promote gender equality goals, but this is not materialising. The Cotonou Agreement includes women’s associations in the definition of civil society, and the Programming Guidelines state that civil society actors with a role in cross-cutting issues such as gender should participate. Although civil society has been recognised in principle, the Agreement does not state clearly which actors may take part in what activities, and who will determine their participation.⁵⁷ According to a joint declaration on gender by ACP-EU civil society, the policy commitment in Cotonou does not go far enough, because the role of women and their involvement in programming and dialogue has not been specified.⁵⁸

⁵² ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (21 March 2002) “Cape Town Declaration on future ACP-EU negotiations of new trading arrangements.” 3382/02/fin.

⁵³ European Commission (23 July 2002) “Commission Staff Working Paper: Fourth Asia Europe Meeting Summit in Copenhagen, September 22-24 2002. Unity and Strength in Diversity.”

⁵⁴ EU-Latin America & the Caribbean Summit (17-18 May 2002) “Conclusions – Political Declaration.” Madrid.

⁵⁵ European Commission (31 October 2000) “Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Follow-up to the First Summit between Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union” COM (2000) 670 final.

⁵⁶ EU-Latin America & the Caribbean Summit (17-18 May 2002) “Conclusions – Common values and positions.” Madrid

⁵⁷ Arts, K. op.cit

⁵⁸ ACP-EU Civil Society Meeting (July 2001) “Gender Declaration.” Brussels

In practice, civil society participation has been lacking. Only three CSPs (Zambia, Namibia and Solomon Island) provide a list of civil society organisations, including women's organisations or networks that were involved in consultations.⁵⁹ A survey on civil society participation under the Cotonou Agreement, organised with the support of Eurostep in a few ACP countries (Uganda, Tanzania, Benin, Cameroon and the Dominican Republic) showed that, even in cases where concrete mechanisms for consultation on CSP were put in place, local civil society organisations comment that such mechanisms were not always appropriate and that a real impact on the outcome of the process was not possible.⁶⁰ The survey called for comprehensive and appropriate information, flexible timetables, accountability of government and EU delegations, the formation of non-state actors fora, and capacity building for CSOs. In the context of weak civil society participation overall, women's organisations face particular barriers to equitable participation. Women's organisations often lack the resources, capacity, and experience to engage in national level advocacy debates.⁶¹ Furthermore, participatory processes organised by governments tend to go through umbrella organisations or networks which may not include women's organisations. Lessons learnt from analysis of participation in the PRS processes found that "Male-dominated NGOs, trade unions or professional associations are unlikely to prioritise the gender interests of poor women. Instead, it is likely that 'speaking with a single voice' would mean subordinating women's gender interests to men's".⁶² In this context, dialogue between government and civil society in policy development carries high risks that women's organisations and gender equality objectives will be excluded.

The policy framework to ensure civil society participation in non-ACP countries contains even fewer guarantees for civil society, particularly by women's organisations. As a result, a joint EU-Latin America civil society declaration to contribute to the 2002 Madrid Summit called for the establishment of regular official meetings of civil society to coincide with bi-regional summits. The declaration asked for special attention to the human rights of vulnerable people and the promotion of gender equality.⁶³ Civil society working on Asia-Europe relations have made similar recommendations. The declaration of the ASEM 2000 People's Forum, held in parallel to the third ASEM Summit, called for an Asia-Europe relationship based on the promotion of human rights, sustainable development, economic and social equity, including gender equality, and the active participation of civil society in decision-making.⁶⁴

The Commission must implement a clear policy and strategy to support civil society participation and women's voices and create space for gender equality in policy dialogue. Without women's empowerment, political pressure for change will not be strong enough. Broad-based, inclusive political dialogue that addresses the issues at the heart of development is the bedrock of successful development cooperation

⁵⁹ APRODEV (August 2002) "Rapid survey of 40 ACP Country Support Strategies – What about participation of civil society?"

⁶⁰ Eurostep (2002) Five reports on "Case studies on Civil society participation in the ACP-EU Country Support Strategy." DEALS U (Uganda), GRAPAD (Benin), ADEID (Cameroon), TCDD & TASOET (Tanzania) and CIECA (Dominican Republic).

⁶¹ Akerkar, Supriya (2001) "Gender and Participation: Overview Report." Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

⁶² Christian Aid (October 2001) "Ignoring the experts: poor people's exclusion from poverty reduction strategies." London.

⁶³ Madrid Declaration (19 April 2002) Second meeting of organised civil society from Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

⁶⁴ ASEM 2000 People's Forum (17-21 October 2000) "People's Vision 2000: Towards a just, equal, and sustainable world."

programmes. Without gender on the agenda in discussions with partner countries, donor co-ordination on gender, and the participation of CSOs promoting gender equality, the EU will not be able to meet its goals of poverty reduction and promotion of human rights.

4 Mechanisms to put Gender Policies into Practice

Institutional structures, processes, and policies exist to facilitate the implementation of the EU's gender policy commitments. Some have been created explicitly in the context of gender policies, while others arose out of the broader internal reform agenda. Taken together, these mechanisms are intended to provide the Commission with the tools it needs to mainstream gender. But to date, they have had limited success in moving commitments to gender equality from policy to practice.

4.1 Organisational Structure

The organisational restructuring of development and external relations activities created opportunities for effective gender mainstreaming. In EuropeAid, created in 2000, the regional directorates within EuropeAid are responsible for gender mainstreaming within their regional activities, and one directorate, Directorate F, is responsible for horizontal themes, including gender, human rights, children rights, the environment and others (food security, drugs, reproductive health, etc.). The horizontal directorate is well-placed to provide expert advice and institutional support to regional activities. Such a structure should create a system of checks and balances to ensure gender mainstreaming.

But organisational structures which are meant to ensure that gender is both mainstreamed and given specific attention have resulted in gender being everywhere and nowhere. One World Action found in its research that some staff in DG Trade, DG External Relations, and EuropeAid were aware of gender policy commitments, but did not appear to know much about how to put them in practice. Some officials knew that it was necessary to consult the Gender Help Desk⁶⁵ as part of policy making and project management, but they could not name any of the experts. In EuropeAid, staff in the geographical directorates do not feel they get strong support from experts within the horizontal Directorate F or units in EuropeAid or other DGs responsible for cross-cutting and thematic issues. By the same token, staff within the horizontal directorates or units and gender experts say that they lack the time and mandate to ensure that gender cuts across the organisation's activities.

Within EuropeAid, ten thematic networks have been established to improve quality standards and advise EU Delegations in view of the deconcentration process of External Assistance.⁶⁶ The thematic networks may be consulted by the Inter-service Quality Support Group and can be asked for specific advice. Their tasks are to gather expertise, provide guidelines when appropriate, exchange of best practice and

⁶⁵ The Gender Help Desk provides technical assistance and related services in the field of integrating gender issues in development for the Gender Desk in DG Development as well as to individual Commission functionaries upon request. It is funded under a framework contract out of the Women in Development budget line.

⁶⁶ The deconcentration of management of external aid to EU delegations is a key element of the reform of the management of the external assistance. The first delegations became operational in 2002. The objective is to extend the deconcentration to all delegations before the end of 2003. See Annual Report of EuropeAid (2001) on External Assistance, and Communication from the European Commission (3 July 2001) on the Development of the External Service.

recommendations on training.⁶⁷ A thematic network on gender has not been established within EuropeAid, although staff acknowledge that gender mainstreaming is not effectively implemented. Across the Commission and delegations, staff admits that gender is everyone's responsibility and no one's priority.⁶⁸

Deconcentration of decision-making from the European Commission Brussels office to EU delegations creates opportunities for better work on gender, as gender policies could move from being abstract policy commitments to locally appropriate, operational tools (such as guidelines and training, expertise on financial management, etc.). But there is little evidence that the newly expanded delegations are taking forward the EU's gender policy commitments.⁶⁹ Rather, staff in delegations report being overwhelmed by a range of new tasks, with insufficient training and resources to take forward the work. The priority given to gender depends to a great deal on the personal commitment of staff in the delegation. The move to deconcentration has created opportunities for work on gender to be strengthened in delegations where there is a strong political commitment by staff. But it also means that if there is no internal constituency within the delegation to back the work, gender is likely to be low on the agenda. Rather than ensuring coherence and efficiency, the reform agenda risks creating a patchwork of gender policy implementation.

The Inter-service Quality Support Group

The Inter-service Quality Support Group housed in DG Development and set up as part of the reform process⁷⁰, should also be a source of institutional support and coherence for work on gender and development cooperation. The IQSG was set up under the 2000 Community Development Policy to promote better coherence among the RELEX DGs, by reviewing proposed policies with special attention to horizontal themes. The integration of gender, one of the horizontal themes, should be monitored through the IQSG. Gender should be assessed as a horizontal theme in the IQSG process, but the group lacks the staff capacity to 'gender check' every piece of EC external relations policy. Because the policy making process is often rushed, there is rarely time to contribute a sound gender analysis of a proposed policy, and little time for the necessary revisions. Furthermore, the Commission services are not required to integrate the recommendations proposed by the IQSG. The weakness of the IQSG in promoting gender policy implementation is evident in the results from the CSP review. Thus, despite the existence of these groups, there is little institutional support for work on gender.

The organisational restructuring process of development and external relations activities has led to a strengthening of EuropeAid and to a weakening of DG Development. In line with this there is a danger, that management rationale and technical proceedings will easily take precedence over already weak policy commitments and dialogue.

⁶⁷ According to EC-NGO Consultation on rationalisation of budget lines in 2002, the ten thematic networks under the responsibility of EuropeAid are: Trade & Development, Institutional Capacity Building (good governance, rule of law), Budgetary Support, Transport, Education and Training, Health, Development of Private Sector, Information Society, Social Funds and Protection, Rural Development.

⁶⁸ One World Action (forthcoming)

⁶⁹ One World Action (forthcoming)

⁷⁰ See Communication from the Commission (16 May 2000) on the Reform of the Management of External Assistance.

The Inter-service Group on Gender Equality

All the Commission services are bound by commitments to gender mainstreaming under the 2000 Framework Strategy on Gender Equality. DG Employment and Social Affairs takes the lead in their monitoring and implementation, and the Commission has developed mechanisms to provide institutional support and coherence for work on gender. The Inter-service Group on Gender Equality includes staff from each DG who have responsibility for gender. The group, led by DG Employment, coordinates the activities for implementation of the Framework Strategy on Gender Equality. The group should provide a space for sharing experiences, reinforcing staff commitment and providing support. But members of the Inter-service Group on Gender Equality are often involved in gender work as an aside to their main responsibilities and participate in the group out of personal commitment rather than institutional requirement. To date, the group has played a limited role and has not had a strong influence on gender mainstreaming in external relations, and there is little evidence that it has successfully leveraged its influence with RELEX DGs. Rather, some staff in RELEX DGs seem to be unaware of the commitments to gender mainstreaming and view the involvement of DG Employment and Social Affairs as an interference.

4.2 Human Resources

The allocation of human resources to support gender mainstreaming has been one of the most consistent themes throughout Commission, Council and Parliament statements on gender mainstreaming. The 1992 Resolution of the Parliament called on the Commission to “provide the women and development desks in DGVII and DGI with the permanent staff necessary.” The 1994 Assessment Report provided a detailed illustration of the staffing problems on gender, noting that in twelve years, positions on gender had been staffed by a range of short-term Commission officials, external consultants, and staff seconded from Member States. The report concluded that “the WID permanent staff of the Commission is certainly insufficient for the huge task required” and recommended that staffing of WID units should be increased. The 1995 Communication said that “Gender specialists should be appointed at policy level, in the technical division and at the operational level”⁷¹ and the 1995 Council Resolution specifically called for adequate human, financial and other resources. The 1997 Progress Report noted that “The scarcity of specialised staff ... continues to hamper proper attention to the established gender integration procedures.” It also commented that “external consultants cannot fill the need for sufficient permanent expertise on gender issues within the Commission, in order to ensure long-term institutional capacity and sustained internal follow-up initiatives.”⁷² The 2001 Council Conclusions and 2002 Parliamentary Report both made strong statements about the need for sufficient human resources. Yet the 2001 Communication gives no details about the allocation of human resources for gender.

Given the track-record on this issue, it is unacceptable that the Commission is still facing enormous under-staffing to deliver on its gender policy commitments. Gender expertise in the Commission is still staffed primarily through external consultants or detached national experts. Gender expertise within DG Development is provided through Detached National Experts (DNE) seconded by SIDA. EuropeAid, which has a good gender mainstreamed structure in theory, lacks sufficient staff. In DG External

⁷¹ Communication from the Commission (18 September 1995) “Integrating gender issues in development co-operation.”

⁷² Commission Staff Working Paper (3 November 1997) “Integrating gender issues in development co-operation: Progress Report 1997.”

Relations and DG Trade, there are no full-time dedicated staff providing gender expertise. Delegations, some with newly expanded responsibilities, lack staff with gender expertise and responsibility. In recent research by One World Action, one delegation official commented that he did not know whether the delegation had anyone with specific responsibility for gender – after a few moments of reflection, he recalled that there was someone responsible, thus showing the importance attached to gender within the delegation.⁷³

Most work on gender is thus contracted out to external consultants. Although consultants are inputting solid policy analysis, they compound the perception that gender is an issue only for experts, and they are unable to act as catalysts and internal advocates. The reliance on consultants and DNEs means that there is little institutional memory and it is impossible to build internal momentum. By out-sourcing gender, the Commission sends the message that it is a marginal concern and not institutionally owned. Thus, gender policies cannot be successfully implemented in large part because human resources have not been allocated in ways which aid implementation.

4.3. Financial Resources

The 1998 Council Regulation on integration of gender issues in development cooperation allocated an envelope of 25 M Euro for the period of 1999-2003, managed under budget line B7-6220 (formerly B7-6110). This fund is for mainstreaming of gender analysis, actions addressing major gender disparities, meeting the OECD/DAC criteria for gender integration, and promoting public and private capacity in developing countries. Over the period of 1999-2002 a total amount of 8.66 M Euro was allocated to this budget line. In 2002, the budget is 2.02 M Euro. The budget line expires at the end of 2003.

Given the challenges in mainstreaming gender in all policy and programming with partner countries, a budget of two to three million Euro a year can only serve a catalytic function and is no substitute for cross-cutting institutional commitment. It is clear, in the context of performance to date on mainstreaming gender, that as long as specific and sufficient resources are not allocated to cross-cutting issues, they are not perceived as a priority by most EC staff. It is difficult for desk officers to support mainstreaming under such conditions. Therefore, integration of gender issues must be an institutional priority and must be supported by adequate funding for training and human resources.

Current discussions between the European Parliament and the European Commission on the European Community aid budget address questions of political priorities in geographical budget lines and thematic/horizontal lines, and call for a more performance based budget reporting system. This discussion takes place in the context of the Commission's intention to rationalise the aid budget. The Commission argues that it is nearly impossible to demonstrate the impact of European Community aid on separate "sectoral issues" (i.e. education, health, gender equality etc) when using macro-economic or budgetary support, but this is just one more reason for the importance of gender sensitive indicators and a more targeted approach (for example, a commitment to allocate 35% of the financial envelopes to mainly health and education). The statement by the Commission that it is much easier to include cross-cutting issues through policy dialogue on budgetary support than through a project approach may be welcome, but the impact of this approach on promoting gender equality must be demonstrated. As long as the integration of cross-cutting approaches

⁷³ One World Action (forthcoming)

in European Community aid is not clearly demonstrated through adequate indicators and disaggregated data, horizontal budget lines have to be maintained and given priority as they have proven their innovative, catalytic and complementary function.⁷⁴

The funding of gender mainstreaming should mirror the basic principle of mainstreaming – that resources should be allocated both through a specific budget line on gender and through increased allocation within mainstream budget lines to gender initiatives. For example, training of Commission staff funded under the administration budget line should include thorough gender training. In addition, the budget line on gender should be available to provide additional, specified training on gender, as requested by Commission services.

Unless transparent and concrete steps are taken by the Commission to mainstream gender and other cross-cutting themes into geographical budget lines, supported by earmarked resources to do so, the budget line on integrating gender issues will be the main mechanism to ensure implementation of the EU's policy commitments. In the current policy and institutional environment, an end to this source of financial support might result in the total evaporation of gender policies.

4.4 Training and Capacity

The need for training and capacity building for gender mainstreaming has been well recognised by the EU institutions. The 1992 Resolution of the Parliament called for training on women and development for staff in headquarters and delegations. The 1994 Assessment reported that gender training was not prioritised by staff, as shown by staff attendance at workshops.⁷⁵ Because gender training was not obligatory and staff had a limited number of training days per year, staff also tended to attend other courses that they consider of higher priority. The Commission's strategy on gender training lacked planning, a coherent framework, and institutional commitment and tended to duplicate rather than use existing materials. The report recommends the development of an effective and obligatory gender training programme, with sufficient resources and management support.

The 1995 Communication echoes this recommendation, stating that "Gender training should be provided on a regular basis, and the gender dimension should be integrated into other training courses and workshops." The 1997 Progress Report also comments on training, noting that the standard training module in project management has been modified to include gender. But as "this is a short module" and is taken by very few staff, "specialised gender awareness training remains essential." The problems noted in the 1997 Progress Report arise from short-term contracts, lack of time among all Commission staff to integrate new methods due to heavy workloads, and lack of time among gender desks to support a thorough gender training strategy.

Yet despite these repeated recommendations for gender training, the Commission still notes in its 2001 Communication that it must build staff capacity on gender and recommends gender training in delegation and headquarters. The result will be that "by 2006 all Commission staff working in the area of development cooperation will have the professional competence – in dialogue with developing countries – to promote equality between women and men." Improving capacity on gender is much needed, and plans

⁷⁴ NGO Position Paper (February 2002) "Sectoral Targets: Why do we need them? Comments for the seminar: Hitting the target, EP 26/02/02." APRODEV, CLONG, Eurostep, Save the Children and Solidar.

⁷⁵ Colombo, p.35

being proposed by the Commission for a thorough gender training programme are welcomed. But it is not acceptable that, since 1994, lack of gender training has been recognised as a barrier to effective gender mainstreaming, and nearly ten years later, the Commission continues to use lack of training and capacity as an explanation for poor implementation of gender policies.

Gender training is not integrated into overall staff training, such as in training on project management or pre-posting training. When asked about gender training, staff in RELEX DGs and delegations recall it as something that they went to once and that they have not heard of since.⁷⁶ One official said there had not been gender training in her office since 1996, another said he had not received any gender training at all in his three years with the Commission, another said training did not take place in the delegation at all. Gender training is thus not regular, obligatory, or encouraged by management, and such training as is provided does not seem to have great relevance to people's jobs.

Building people's capacity on gender requires both de-mystifying gender and ensuring that expert advice is there when needed. Interviews with Commission staff have revealed a huge range of competence and confidence regarding gender. A handful of people feel confident, but most staff feel that gender is not their area of specialisation and more importantly, that they will never really understand it. Gender has become a concept that can only be understood by an esoteric group of 'gender experts'. In some cases, staff do not understand gender because they believe that it is not important. But for many others, they see that a gender perspective is important, but they believe it is too technical an issue for them.

What has been lost in the analytical models, checklists, and mapping exercises is the reality that gender as a concept belongs to everyone. Gender mainstreaming should be about getting practitioners to ask basic questions about how women and men experience life differently. All policy has a gender impact, and at worst, it will deepen gender inequality or maintain the status quo. Throughout the policy making cycle, there are windows of opportunity where curiosity about gender could result in policies and practice that challenge gender inequality. Ultimately, tools for mainstreaming gender need to be about getting people to ask such questions at those critical moments.

While gender is fundamentally a concept that belongs to everyone, some issues do require expertise or experience in order to address them. Staff need to have access to expert advice. Alongside providing such expert advice, staff with responsibility for gender need to build people's confidence, de-mystify gender, and firmly root it in reality. Gender experts play a critical role as internal advocates. Asking people to change their perspective on their work is no easy task, and sometimes people need prompting and encouragement.

4.5 Learning

A number of mechanisms exist to promote institutional learning on gender. According to the 2001 Programme of Action, gender should be regularly integrated in programme monitoring and evaluations. On a broader level, the annual reports on development cooperation should monitor gender, as one of the horizontal themes. But the first annual report on development cooperation did not mainstream a gender analysis at all. Under the Framework Strategy on Gender Equality, the regular reports to the Group of

⁷⁶ One World Action (forthcoming)

Commissioners on Equal Opportunities are also an opportunity for learning, but to date, it is not evident that these reports are being taken seriously. The discussions between staff in Member States, Parliamentarians, and Commission officials should be another opportunity for monitoring work on gender. But in many cases these meetings become opportunities for grand statements and evasion of tougher questions about lack of policy implementation.

Thus, it is clear that the lack of progress in putting gender policies into practice is in large part due to institutional weakness. Organisational structures, both at headquarters and delegations, have mainstreamed gender in a way that means gender is everywhere and nowhere. There are insufficient staff, both at headquarters and delegations, with responsibility to promote gender mainstreaming, and the staff that are in post are working within an institution and culture that has not really taken gender on board. Commission staff lack understanding and awareness of gender policies, and there is little quality training available to raise their capacity. Recommendations for improving work on gender, dating from the 1980s and 1990s, contain many repetitions, in large part because the European Commission has not done enough to learn from its experiences. Regular learning and evaluation mechanisms have become exercises in rhetoric and glossing over lack of action.

5 Political Will

Across the EU, policy statements, leadership, political will, and accountability for gender mainstreaming are issues which do not receive sufficient attention. This helps to explain the disappointing progress in putting gender policies into practice. Throughout the 1994 Assessment Report, the analysis suggests lack of political will as a major barrier to effective work on gender. Yet this point is not clearly made, nor does the importance of political commitment emerge as a recommendation. Similarly, the 1997 Progress Report demonstrates the importance of political will, by showing, for example, that clear guidance from top Commission staff and mandatory procedures contribute to more effective gender mainstreaming. Yet the Report does not draw the obvious conclusion that political will is key.

The Commission made a step towards acknowledging the importance of political will and accountability mechanisms in its 1995 Communication, stating that “several studies have shown that what makes a real impact is the compulsory nature of operational procedures to ensure integration of gender issues. ... Institutional accountability mechanisms and measures should therefore be established.” But this recognition of accountability mechanisms and political will has been blurred in the 2001 Communication. Accountability and political will have been confused with and simplified to monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance, thus removing the fundamentally political nature of the challenges facing the Commission. The Commission also “underlines that the ultimate responsibility for promoting equality between women and men lies with national governments.” This may be to some extent true, but in light of the foot-dragging on policy implementation, this analysis could easily be used as an excuse.

A review of evaluations of gender mainstreaming by donors and civil society reveals lack of accountability as a key barrier to gender mainstreaming.⁷⁷ According to many evaluations, gender policies and guidelines may exist on paper, but ultimately it is not clear that people are responsible for implementing these policies. Often, gender is not mentioned as a specific responsibility in staff Terms of Reference.⁷⁸ Competence on gender is not usually a required skill during recruitment, and performance assessment processes do not look at competence on gender.⁷⁹ Senior managers are not held accountable for implementation of gender policies. Failure to mainstream gender does not carry clearly specified consequences⁸⁰ - for example, project proposals which clearly lack attention to gender are not rejected or returned for revision because they lack a gender analysis.⁸¹

In the context of such well-documented understanding of the importance of political will and accountability, the EU's gender mainstreaming strategy is missing a critical link. All heads of units and heads of delegation should have demonstrated competence and commitment to gender equality. Competence in gender mainstreaming should be a criteria in staff recruitment, and staff performance appraisals should assess competence. Mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure staff commitment to

⁷⁷ See annex.

⁷⁸ IFAD (July 2000) “An IFAD Approach to gender mainstreaming.”

⁷⁹ Schalkwyk, J., Thomas, H. and Woroniuk, B. (July 1996) “Mainstreaming: a strategy for achieving equality between women and men.” Stockholm: SIDA.

⁸⁰ DANIDA (May 2000) “Gender equality in Danish development co-operation: a contribution to the revision of Danish development policy.”

⁸¹ Schalkwyk, J., Thomas, H. and Woroniuk, B. (July 1996) “Mainstreaming: a strategy for achieving equality between women and men.” Stockholm: SIDA.

gender mainstreaming policies. For example, rewards and incentives for high performance or improved skills in this area should be developed. There must be consequences for poor performance and inadequate attention to gender. Management level accountability for gender mainstreaming is fundamental, as stated in the 2002 Report of the European Parliament.⁸²

Conclusion

The EU's gender mainstreaming strategy is more of an idea than a reality. Mainstream policy instruments, such as regional cooperation agreements, CSPs, and SIAs, fail to integrate gender. A high proportion of European Community aid is going to sectors like transport and budgetary support where effective gender mainstreaming has made little progress and there is little commitment to reform. At a country-level, there is little donor co-ordination on gender, and gender is rarely an issue in the dialogue with the national government or work with civil society organisations.

Lack of progress in putting gender policies into practice is in large part due to institutional weakness. Organisational structures have mainstreamed gender in a way that means gender is everywhere and nowhere. There is insufficient staff, both at headquarters and delegations, and the staff that are in post are working against an institution that has not really taken gender on board. Commission staff lack understanding of gender policies, and there is little quality training available to raise their capacity. Regular learning mechanisms have become exercises in rolling out more rhetoric and glossing over lack of action. Lack of political will is by far the largest stumbling block in implementing the EU's gender policies.

Given the importance of gender equality in the fight against poverty, the slow progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and the reality that so many women and men, girls and boys are denied their human rights, the EU cannot afford to wait any longer in closing the gap between its gender policies and its practice.

⁸² Parliament Report (2002) on the programme of action for the mainstreaming of gender equality in Community development cooperation.

6 Recommendations

EU Policy Commitments to Gender

- 1 The EU's approach to gender mainstreaming should be firmly grounded in a rights-based approach. While there are strong efficiency arguments for integrating gender in development, these arguments should be used with care and placed within a framework that sees gender equality as an end in itself and essential component of realising human rights.
- 2 The EU should produce a policy that spells out its gender mainstreaming strategy in reference to hard areas of external relations, such as trade, economic cooperation, political dialogue, and humanitarian aid. This policy statement should complement existing gender policy commitments and ensure that gender is not viewed as someone else's responsibility.
- 3 Cooperation agreements governing relations between the EU and Southern countries should mainstream gender equality. Human rights clauses in cooperation agreements must include gender as a factor of analysis.
- 4 Trade agreements, and the accompanying SIAs, must include analysis of the gender impact at a macro and micro level.
- 5 The European Commission should produce and publish guidelines on mainstreaming gender in the six priority sectors of cooperation.
- 6 Specific gender mainstreaming initiatives should be targeted at sectors that are not traditionally strong on gender but receive a high percentage of European Community aid.
- 7 Commission guidelines for CSPs should include gender more explicitly, particularly in reference to the development of its response strategy.
- 8 All CSPs should be assessed on gender mainstreaming during the quality assurance phase. This should focus particularly on whether gender carries through from the situational analysis to the response strategy and implementation. CSPs that do not mainstream gender should be revised.
- 9 Guidelines for policy coherence should be revised to include gender, and assessment of policy coherence in CSPs should refer to existing EC gender policies.

Gender in Programme Implementation

- 10 The Commission should assess the impact, accessibility, and usage of the revised Project Cycle Manual, and make any revisions necessary. The assessment should determine whether the manual has contributed to improved understanding of gender mainstreaming and more effective project management.
- 11 The EU, working with other donors, should document and raise the profile of existing examples of good practice in donor co-ordination on gender.
- 12 Donors, including the EU, should co-ordinate their efforts on gender, sharing information and resources. Gender should regularly be on the agenda in donor co-ordination meetings, at a headquarters and partner country level. If no other donor is leading, the EU should take responsibility for bringing up gender as a donor co-ordination issue.
- 13 Gender should be a regular, rolling agenda item in discussions between the EU and ACP, Asia and Latin American countries (for example, at annual summits).
- 14 The participation of CSOs, particularly women's organisations, in the political dialogue process should be strengthened. The EU should establish guidelines and working methods for civil society participation, and facilitate participation by providing access to information and resources.

Mechanisms

Organisational Structure

- 15 Newly expanded delegations should have clearly-defined responsibilities for gender mainstreaming.
- 16 The Inter-service Group on Gender should be strengthened, by clarifying the group's mandate and acknowledging staff's participation as part of their job responsibilities.
- 17 The European Commission should increase the mandate of the Inter-service Quality Support Group to assess gender mainstreaming in the quality assurance phase of policy and programming.
- 18 A thematic network on gender should be established within EuropeAid to support delegations and develop sectoral guidelines.

Human Resources

- 19 The European Commission should establish five permanent positions on gender mainstreaming, divided across DG Development, DG External Relations, EuropeAid, DG Trade, and ECHO. DNEs and external consultants should provide support and expertise but should not carry the weight of responsibility.
- 20 At least one member of delegations should have gender expertise.
- 21 The European Commission should ensure permanent and sufficient gender expertise and staffing of the IQSG.

Financial Resources

- 22 The regulation governing budget line B7-6220 should be renewed and the budget allocation should be increased from 2 million Euro year. The budget line should maintain its catalytic and complementary function.
- 23 Within country programmes, more financial resources should be allocated to programmes which have a clear impact on promoting gender equality. European Community spending through budgetary and macro-economic support should include targeted initiatives for gender equality.
- 24 The Commission should strengthen and develop indicators to monitor whether European Community aid spending is having an impact on promoting gender equality goals, particularly in reference to the Millennium Development Goals.
- 25 A gender audit of the European Community's aid spending should be conducted, working alongside civil society and the Parliament. European Community aid should support the gender budgeting initiatives of civil society in partner countries, to help assess the gender impact of sector programmes.

Training and Capacity

- 26 All heads of unit and heads of delegation should have demonstrated understanding of gender, competence in gender mainstreaming, and commitment to gender equality principles.
- 27 The European Commission should initiate and allocate resources to a thorough and regular programme of gender training for all Commission staff, both at headquarters and delegations.
- 28 Training should include gender awareness training (about attitudes and sensitivities regarding gender relations) and gender planning training (the more technical gender analysis of programme design and implementation).
- 29 All training schemes and modules for Commission staff, in particular pre-posting training and training for new officials, should be revised in order to include a gender-aware and sensitive approach. General staff training resourced through the

European Commission's administration budget should include integrated gender training.

- 30 Training should be compulsory, periodic, and aimed at staff at all levels, especially management and senior official. It should be appropriate to the responsibilities of the individuals being trained.
- 31 Training should enjoy full support from the top down and be designed and delivered in ways which addresses needs from the bottom-up.

Learning

- 32 The annual development reports should monitor progress in implementing gender mainstreaming commitment across European Community development cooperation.
- 33 All evaluations of European Community cooperation with partner countries should mainstream gender.
- 34 The European Commission should increase its collaboration with civil society organisations, both in Europe and in Southern countries, as a valuable resource for learning and improving practice on work towards gender equality.
- 35 Annual expert meetings on gender between Member States and the European Commission should be institutionalised.

Political Will and Accountability

- 36 Responsibility and accountability for gender mainstreaming should rest at the highest level – with Commissioners, heads of unit, and heads of delegation.
- 37 Competence in gender mainstreaming should be a criteria in staff recruitment and should be assessed in staff performance appraisals.
- 38 Rewards and incentives for high performance or improved skills in gender mainstreaming should be developed. There must be consequences for inadequate attention to gender.

ANNEX

Institutional Experience with Gender Mainstreaming

The EU is not alone in facing the challenge of gender mainstreaming. Other multi-lateral and bilateral donors, national governments, and civil society organisations have experienced the difficulties of putting their policy commitments to gender equality into practice. While it is comforting to know that the EU is not alone, it is troubling to see the EU reliving some of the problems that have been analysed and documented by others.

Gender as a concept

At least part of the gap between gender policies and practice is explained by gaps in understanding and interpretation. As a concept, gender remains poorly understood, despite international agreements which define it and set out how governments intend to put it to practice. The understanding of gender within a donor or national government transforms considerably in the move from policy statement to implementation. This percolation process could result in applications of gender mainstreaming being locally owned and appropriate, but in most cases dilution and evaporation are the results. For many, gender is equated with women, and mainstreaming women means ensuring that women are physically present in a process.⁸³ The gap in definitions exists between civil society and governments, with the result that civil society, national government, and donor expectations for gender mainstreaming may be quite different.⁸⁴

The context has a significant impact on how an agency can put into practice its understanding of gender equality. Although few evaluations make this point explicitly, most allude to the fact that it is more difficult to work on gender with some governments and institutions than others. If gender is a highly politicised issue, then an active and visible strategy of promoting gender mainstreaming becomes more difficult.⁸⁵ Although it is important to recognise that context makes a big difference, this kind of analysis is used in some cases to justify lack of implementation of gender policies.

Gaps between gender policies and practice arise in part because people feel that gender is an externally imposed agenda. National governments sometimes view gender as a donor imposed requirement, particularly when donors place emphasis on this during the development of sector programmes.⁸⁶ Gender mainstreaming is unlikely to succeed when people at the project implementation level feel that gender has been handed down from above.⁸⁷

Thus, studies to date have found that differing understandings of gender, the institution's starting-point on gender, and lack of ownership of policies create problems for gender mainstreaming at a conceptual level, before even attempting to put policies into practice.

⁸³ Woodford-Berger, P. (2000) "Gender equality and women's empowerment: A DAC review of agency experiences 1993-1998." Stockholm: SIDA Studies in Evaluation

⁸⁴ BRIDGE (nd) Approaches to institutionalising gender (Issue 5, development and gender in brief). Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

⁸⁵ DANIDA (May 2000) "Gender equality in Danish development co-operation: a contribution to the revision of Danish development policy."

⁸⁶ DANIDA (May 2000) "Gender equality in Danish development co-operation: a contribution to the revision of Danish development policy."

⁸⁷ IFAD (July 2000) "An IFAD Approach to gender mainstreaming."

Gender – a moving target

Governments and civil society report that the lack of sex-disaggregated data prevents people from understanding the gender impacts of policy, designing programmes that respond to gender-differentiated needs, and monitoring progress.⁸⁸ It is not only lack of data but also inadequate use of existing data that gives people the impression that they do not know what they are working towards. Existing data sources are not mined for gender analytical information (for example, national censuses). People are unsure of how to use gender analytical data. Evaluations tend to measure progress on gender equality by counting the number of women who participated, or describing the benefits to women, rather than measuring how the situation of women and men has changed in relation to each other.⁸⁹ There is little progress in measuring whether the gender gap is narrowing. As a result, practitioners feel like gender is a moving target, which contributes to the sense of frustration that progress is not possible.

Development in practice

The lack of a strategic, consistent approach to gender equality appears consistently in donor, government, and civil society analyses. Gender is not linked up to other development cooperation priorities, such as the International Development Targets, now called the Millennium Development Goals.⁹⁰ Lack of consistent integration of gender in the mainstream of policy and practice means that attention to gender comes and goes, depending on the staff responsible or the trends at the time. The lack of consistency can be seen throughout the project management cycle. From the design phase all the way through to evaluation, a gender analysis is not routinely integrated into all programmes. There is a tendency to focus on gender related work that produces visible results, often at the field level, rather than on more low-profile processes of organisational transformation.⁹¹

Resources

Government and civil society analyses all report that lack of resources and poor management of resources significantly impedes the implementation of gender policies. Sufficient human and financial resources are not allocated to allow institutions to meet their stated commitments to gender.⁹² For example, a survey of the budgets of women's national machineries in Africa found that they rarely command more than 3% of the national budget.⁹³ At the design, implementation, and evaluation phases of development management, institutions lack gender experts to push for consistent attention to gender.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ BRIDGE (nd) Approaches to institutionalising gender (Issue 5, development and gender in brief). Brighton: Institute of Development Studies

⁸⁹ Woodford-Berger, P. (2000) "Gender equality and women's empowerment: A DAC review of agency experiences 1993-1998." Stockholm: SIDA Studies in Evaluation.

⁹⁰ Schalkwyk, J., Thomas, H. and Woroniuk, B. (July 1996) "Mainstreaming: a strategy for achieving equality between women and men." Stockholm: SIDA.

⁹¹ BRIDGE (nd) Approaches to institutionalising gender (Issue 5, development and gender in brief). Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

⁹² DANIDA (May 2000) "Gender equality in Danish development co-operation: a contribution to the revision of Danish development policy."

⁹³ Toure, Maréma (2002) "Gender Mainstreaming and its current practice – A perspective from Africa." in "Gender Mainstreaming for invisibility or women's empowerment, Report of WIDE Annual Conference 2001."

⁹⁴ IFAD (July 2000) "An IFAD Approach to gender mainstreaming."

The resourcing of gender mainstreaming has been found not just to be an issue of the number of people employed, but also of the way the resources are managed. Staff employed to act as gender advocates face huge challenges. Despite a commitment to mainstreaming, gender is still regarded as an isolated issue and the responsibility of one person.⁹⁵ Institutions often have unrealistic expectations of what gender advocates can achieve, and there is a lack of clarity about their roles and responsibilities. Gender advocates tend to be women, and sometimes they are selected on the basis of their sex, rather than their understanding of the issues.⁹⁶ These posts are often filled by junior staff who lack the seniority, credibility, and experience to make progress on gender.⁹⁷ Gender advocates often work in a hostile environment, and it can be hard to maintain motivation.

The way that institutions support staff working on gender plays a significant role. Organisations often reproduce patterns of gender inequality in their hiring and employment practices. Professional staff tend to be men, and support staff are usually women.⁹⁸ Senior members of staff send strong signals about the importance given to gender within the institution.⁹⁹ If there are lots of jokes or flippant remarks about gender by managers, gender advocates have a very hard time establishing credibility.

Such signals from management do little to encourage staff to build their competence on gender. Analyses by governments and civil society consistently point out that lack of capacity prevents staff from mainstreaming a gender perspective in their work.¹⁰⁰ People tend to have uneven understandings of the concept of gender and only a vague understanding of how gender analysis applies to their work. Staff working at all stages of the project cycle are hampered by this lack of competence and confidence.

In light of these gaps in staff competence, lack of gender training has been recognised as a significant barrier to gender mainstreaming. Agencies are not paying sufficient attention to the need for staff capacity building, despite the recurrent message that staff from the headquarters down to implementation level lack the necessary competence on gender.¹⁰¹

Accountability

Lack of accountability for gender policy implementation appears as a recurrent theme throughout evaluations. Gender policies and guidelines may exist on paper, but ultimately it is not clear who is responsible for implementing these policies. Often, gender is not mentioned as a specific responsibility in staff Terms of Reference.¹⁰² Competence on gender is not usually a required skill during recruitment example when hiring contractors for evaluations. Performance assessment processes do not look at

⁹⁵ IFAD (July 2000) "An IFAD Approach to gender mainstreaming."

⁹⁶ Akpalu, E., Ofei-Aboagye and Derbyshire, H. (November 2000) "Gender mainstreaming: emerging lessons from Ghana." London: DFID, Social Development Department.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ IFAD (July 2000) "An IFAD Approach to gender mainstreaming."

⁹⁹ Akpalu, E., Ofei-Aboagye, & Derbyshire, H. (November 2000) "Gender mainstreaming: emerging lessons from Ghana." London: DFID, Social Development Department.

¹⁰⁰ SIDA, BRIDGE (ed) Approaches to institutionalising gender (Issue 5, development and gender in brief). Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

¹⁰¹ Woodford-Berger, P. (2000) "Gender equality and women's empowerment: A DAC review of agency experiences 1993-1998." Stockholm: SIDA Studies in Evaluation.

¹⁰² IFAD (July 2000) "An IFAD Approach to gender mainstreaming."

competence on gender.¹⁰³ Senior managers are not held accountable for implementation of gender policies. Failure to mainstream gender does not carry clearly specified consequences.¹⁰⁴ For example, project proposals which clearly lack attention to gender are not rejected or returned for revision because they lack a gender analysis.¹⁰⁵ Gender policies have not been fully implemented in part due to lack of accountability mechanisms.

Learning

Lack of learning has played a key role in the poor implementation of gender policies. Part of the reason for the similarities across evaluations is that institutions are repeating many of the same mistakes. SIDA's survey of evaluations showed a tendency to focus on inputs, processes, and activities, rather than on results and impacts.¹⁰⁶ Evaluations tend to treat gender as a separate part rather than integral to the main purpose of the evaluation. Institutions are not routinely using evaluations as a tool for learning about progress towards gender equality and not feeding the lessons learned into new programming.

¹⁰³ Schalkwyk, J., Thomas, H. and Woroniuk, B. (July 1996) "Mainstreaming: a strategy for achieving equality between women and men." Stockholm: SIDA.

¹⁰⁴ DANIDA (May 2000) "Gender equality in Danish development co-operation: a contribution to the revision of Danish development policy."

¹⁰⁵ Schalkwyk, J., Thomas, H. and Woroniuk, B. (July 1996) "Mainstreaming: a strategy for achieving equality between women and men." Stockholm: SIDA.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

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GLOSSARY

Gender Mainstreaming: Concept and Definitions

Empowerment Empowerment covers a wide spectrum of political activities, from individual self-determined actions to the mobilization of groups with the overall objective of changing the existing power relations in society in favour of underprivileged groups. The changes in social and economic institutions which support the existing power structures play an important role here. Increases in self-determined action and an active role of women in economic, social and political processes is the objective of women's empowerment. The intention is for women to gain more access to and control over material as well as non-material resources in order to determine the direction of changes in their situation. It is important to note that power is understood in this context not so much as power 'over' other people but more as power 'to' act in a self-determined way.

Gender Gender refers to the different socially constructed roles which men and women in a particular society are assigned. These roles vary for an individual according to class, age and ethnic group. Different social, cultural, psychological, ideological, historical, religious, ethnic and economic factors determine the widely accepted definitions of masculinity and femininity in a particular society at a particular time. In almost all societies, these factors have the effect of the subordination of women.

Gender Approach The gender approach to the advancement of women starts out with the assumption that it is more effective to induce changes in the relations between men and women than to support women unilaterally, in order to bring about the advancement of women in society. Only in this way can the subordinated position of women be overcome in the long run. Based on the assumption that the disadvantaged position of women and the lack of equality are central problems, the gender approach aims at the empowerment of women in order to solve these problems. Gender analysis and gender planning are means to implement a gender approach to the advancement of women.

Gender Analysis The study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc., between women and men in their assigned gender roles.

Gender Disaggregated Data The collection and separation of data and statistical information by gender to enable comparative analysis/gender analysis.

Gender Impact Assessment Examining policy proposals to see whether they will affect women and men differently, with a view to adapting these proposals to make sure that discriminatory effects are neutralised and that gender equality is promoted.

Gender Mainstreaming The systematic integration of the respective situations, priorities and needs of women and men into all policies, with a view to promoting equality between women and men and mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their effects on the respective situations of women and men in implementing and monitoring. COM (1996) 67 final, 21.2.1996.

Gender Needs Because of their different roles in society and the fact that they are subordinate to men, women's needs are different from those of men. This means that the gender needs of women and men differ.

Practical gender needs (PGN) of women are those needs of women which spring out of their specific context. PGNs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. The fulfilment of PGNs does not challenge the existing gender division of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although they arise out of it. PGNs are usually practical in nature and concerned with inadequate living conditions, like health care, access to clean water, employment and cash income, etc.

Strategic gender needs (SGN) of women are the needs that women identify because of their subordinate position as compared to that of men in society. They may vary according to the particular context, related to the gender division of labour, power and control and may include issues such as legal rights, domestic violence, women's control over their bodies, equal wages, etc. Meeting SGNs enables women to achieve greater equality with men in the long run, entails change in gender relations and therefore poses a challenge to women's subordinate position in society. (Moser 1989).

Gender Planning An active approach to planning which takes gender as a key variable or criterion and which seeks to incorporate an explicit gender dimension into policy or action.

Gender Roles Gender policy and planning recognise that in most societies in the developing countries women have three roles: they are involved in reproductive and productive work and are involved in community management activities, while men are primarily involved in the (mainly paid) productive and community politics activities.

Reproductive roles: These encompass child bearing and child rearing as well as domestic work within the household. All of these are necessary to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. They include not only the biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the present workforce (husband, working children, extended family, or household members) and also the future work force (infants and school going children).

Productive roles: These include work (by both men and women) for pay in cash or kind, producing both for the market and subsistence production with a use value and potential exchange value.

Community management roles: These include activities undertaken mainly by women at the community level as an extension of their reproductive roles, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources for collective consumption, like for example fetching water, collection fuel wood, health care and raising children. This work is voluntary, unpaid and done in women's 'free' time.

Community politics roles: These encompass activities undertaken mainly by men at the community level, like for example organising at the formal political level, usually within the framework of national politics. This is generally paid work; either directly or indirectly and often connected with increased status or power.

Integration (of Women in Development Cooperation) The integration of women in development cooperation means ensuring their participation in all sectors, projects and programmes. Women's special needs and interests should be respected and they should equally benefit from development interventions. According to the OECD/DAC/WID criteria developed by the OCED/DAC/WID group, a fully gender-integrated project should fulfil the following requirements: women's needs and interests are considered as much as those of men in the project design, women in the target

group are actively taking part in implementation, the existing impediments to women's participation are identified and removed, the use of WID/gender expertise is planned and budgeted for during the entire project cycle.

National Machinery A national machinery is any organizational structure on central national level which is responsible for the advancement of women and the elimination of discrimination against women in a particular country. National machineries can be governmental, non-governmental or coalition between governmental and non-governmental organisations. A national machinery may also consist of several institutions. It has to be recognised by the respective government as the national machinery for the advancement of women.

Policy evaporation Policy commitments which often evaporate or fade in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes. (Longwe 1995).

Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) Different WID approaches during the last two decades can be distinguished: The Equity, Efficiency, Anti-Poverty and Empowerment Approaches (Moser 1989).

The Equity Approach, the first WID approach, was based on the assumption that equity of women and men is the prerequisite for women's equal participation in the development process.

The Gender Approach to the advancement of women is different from all the WID approaches in that it advocates not only the unilateral support of women but change in the (power) relations between men and women.

WID and GAD aims at improving the economic and social situation of women in developing countries, either directly or indirectly by a) integrating gender issues into all programmes and projects, b) implementing women specific programmes and projects and c) supporting women related national machineries.

APRODEV is the association of the 17 major ecumenical development and humanitarian aid organisations in Europe. Its task is to influence decision – making processes in the European Union institutions related to North-South issues in order to promote fairness and justice and the eradication of poverty.

The associated member organisations are Bread for All, Switzerland • Bread for the World, Germany • Christian Aid, UK & Ireland • Church of Sweden Aid, Sweden • CIMADE, France • DanChurchAid, Denmark • Diakonia, Sweden • Global Ministries, Netherlands • EAEZ, Austria • EED, Germany • FinnChurchAid, Finland • HEKS/EPER, Switzerland • Hungarian Interchurch Aid, Hungary • ICCO, Netherlands • Icelandic Church Aid, Iceland • Norwegian Church Aid, Norway • Solidarité Protestante, Belgium. The World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation are observers.

One World Action is working for a world free from poverty and oppression in which strong democracies safeguard the rights of all people.

To this end, One World Action provides money, expertise and practical help to organisations committed to strengthening the democratic process and improving people's lives in poor and developing countries. Equally, One World Action brings partners and their concerns to the attention of policy-makers in Europe.

These 'partners for change' include other voluntary organisations, community and co-operative movements, women's organisations and trade unions. Though diverse in kind, they have a common commitment to strengthening local institutions and given people a say in the decisions that shape their lives.

Central to One World Actions' work is the belief that defeating poverty goes hand in hand with promoting human rights and good democratic government. Only if we pursue these goals in a coherent way can we build a just and equal world.